United States
Department of
Agriculture

**Forest Service
and Office of
International
Cooperation and
Development**

**Forestry
Support Program
Sponsored by the
United States
Agency for
International
Development**

November 1992

Non-Governmental Organizations and Natural Resource Management in Africa

A Discussion of Issues and Priorities

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN
CAMEROON: AN INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION
NETWORK: ENHANCING PRIVATE
VOLUNTARY INITIATIVES:
CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO NGO NEEDS
OPMENT: BARRIERS TO INCREASED PRIVATE SECTOR'S
PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS RESOURCES FOR DEVEL
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF
DEVELOPMENT: BENEFIT CONTINUATION NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ION FOR BENEFIT CAN THEY INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY IN
IONS IN AFRICA: REVIEW ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS TO NGO
NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW
LITERATURE REVIEW ORGANIZATIONS MADAGASCAR NGOS AND NATURAL
ION UNDERSTANDING VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS: EXPANDING THEIR DON
ORS VOLUNTARY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS: GUIDELINES FOR
ELOPMENT ROLE NGOS, GOVERNMENT AND AGROFORESTRY RESEARCH
METHODOLOGY IN KENYA FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PRIVATE VOLUNTARY
ORGANIZATION INITIATIVES PROJECT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: A DOCUMENT AND
INCREASING NGO INVOLVEMENT IN FORESTRY INTERMEDIARY NGOS: THE ROLE OF IMPLEMENTAT
ING LINK IN GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT DEMOCRATIZING OF AID: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT NONGOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF VOLUNTARY
ORGANIZATIONS PROTECTING THE GREENING OF AID: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOP
PRACTICE PERSPECTIVES A RESEARCH AGENDA ENVIRONMENT AND ADVOCACY AGENDA FOR
AFRICAN NGOS IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA: RECONCILING NORTH-
SOUTH PERSPECTIVES MANAGEMENT: AGROFORESTRY BY MOBISQUADS IN GHANA
IN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE GAMBIA: PEOPLE
POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES: LES
SONS FROM THE BABAN RAFI FOREST, NIGER ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING AND
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS OF PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZAT
ANCE AGENCIES PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA NGOS AND
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GAMBIA PEOPLE
CULTURAL RESEARCH: SOCIAL FORESTRY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOP
AGRICULTURE: THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS IN
AND TREES: EXPANDING THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS FROM
MENT EXPANDING THE TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT NGOS AND THE LARGE AID DONORS:
IONS FOR THIRD WORLD NGOS: GUIDELINES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE
NATIONAL FORESTRY PROGRAMS NGOS AND MAINSTREAMING MAJOR DONOR
CHANGING THE TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT MAINSTREAMING INSTITUTIONAL DEVEL
SUPPORT FOR THIRD WORLD NGOS: GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABILITY: LESSONS FROM
COLLABORATION IMPLEMENTATION FOR SUSTAINING INSTITUTIONAL DEVEL
INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACCELERATING PROJECTS WITH A
OPMENT SURVEY OF U.S. PVOS WORKING IN AFRICA: PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT:
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT DIVERSITY IN AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS AND
FORESTRY ASSISTANCE TO AFRICA WEST AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS FOR PARTNERSHIP
VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT: PRIORITIES FOR INDIGENOUS NGOS:
AN AGENDA OF FUTURE TASKS FOR INTERNATIONAL AND INDIGENOUS COUNTRIES: AN
VIEWS FROM THE SOUTH MANAGING ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPING VOLUNTARY ACTION AND THE
OPERATIONAL APPROACH GETTING TO THE 21ST CENTURY: VOLUNTARY PEOPLE-CENTERED
GLOBAL AGENDA THIRD GENERATION NGO STRATEGIES: A KEY TO PLANTING AND
DEVELOPMENT A DIRECTORY OF ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON TREE GOVERNMENT GOVERNMENT AND NGO
WOODFUEL CONSERVATION IN KENYA ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT AND NGO
NON-GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, SELF-RELIANCE AND
COLLABORATION: CONDUCTING PRAS IN ZIMBABWE PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL AND
BOOK: APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT VOICES FROM AFRICA VOLUNT
MENT AID FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS MULTI-
ARY INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES TO PARTICIPATORY TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE
STUDY FROM SENEGAL GOVERNING THE COMMONS: THE EVOLUTION
INSTITUTIONS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION DESIGNS FOR COLLAB
STUDY OF PVO/NGO UMBRELLA PROJECTS IN AFRICA
OF INSTITUTION: A PARTICIPATION IN NATURAL RE
ORATION: AND POPULAR PARTICIPATORY STRENGTHENING THE POOR:
PARTNERSHIP IN THE SAHEL: A ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
SOURCE MANAGEMENT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION MAN
WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL
AND THE WORLD BANK: SOCIETY AND BODIES IN AFRICA,
AGING DEVELOPMENT: STATE, DIRECTORY:
CONTEXTS NGO COORDINATING SECTOR
ASIA, AND LATIN AMERICA A
NGOS IN THE FORESTRY
LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL
DEVEL OPMENT:
ANALYTICAL SOURCE
BOOK WITH CASES
A GROWING ROLE FOR
NGOS IN DEVELOP
MENT

JUL 12 1993
FORESTRY LIBRARY

The Forestry Support Program (FSP) is managed jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD), with funds provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Research and Development (R&D) through its Office of Environmental and Natural Resources (ENR).

This report was commissioned by the USDA Forest Service, Office of International Forestry, Forestry Support Program (FSP), whose primary mission to provide technical assistance to USAID Bureaus and Missions and the U.S. Peace Corps. Funds for this report originated from the Office of Analysis, Research and Technical Support (ARTS), Division of Food, Agriculture and Resources Analysis (FARA) of the Africa Bureau of USAID. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the USDA Forest Service or USAID.

Non-Governmental Organizations and Natural Resource Management in Africa: A Discussion of Issues and Priorities

William Booth,
Carolyn Njuki &
Jonathan Otto

Forestry Support Program

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

United States Agency
for International
Development

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of
International
Cooperation and
Development

PREFACE

Natural resource management in Africa takes many forms: a farmer practicing small-scale agroforestry; a community protecting a sacred grove; a project employing people to build and maintain bunds in a watershed. The most important players, of course, are the local people—the user groups. National governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are often involved. Donors, including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), also play various roles.

The changes taking place in Africa, at the local, national and regional level, continue to have implications on natural resource management. In this dynamic atmosphere it is that much more important for all players to work together. This will help ensure that these changes can be positive and that productivity and income of the people will increase while, at the same time, maintaining environmental stability.

The three papers included here revolve around this general theme while focussing on USAID's effectiveness working with NGOs doing natural resource management in Africa. All authors were asked to complete issues and priorities papers that would be used as "points of departure" at a conference scheduled for November 23-24, 1992. Each, however, was asked to take a different perspective: 1) U.S.-based NGOs, 2) African NGOs, and 3) International Organizations (especially UNDP and The World Bank).

It is in this context that these papers should be taken. They are to promote discussion and guidance for further thought and analysis. Your comments and ideas on these papers are not only accepted but actively encouraged. Let us know your concerns and your hopes.

William Helin
Voluntary Assistance Coordinator
Forestry Support Program

International Organizations Perspective

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN CAMEROON: AN AFRICAN NGOS ENVIRONMENT NETWORK INITIATIVES: ENHANCING THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S VOLUNTARY TO RESPOND TO INCREASED NEEDS. PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT FOR CAPACITY BARRIERS TO NGO RESOURCES FOR DEVEL OPMENT: BARRIERS TO NGO MANAGEMENT NEEDS OF PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS MADAGASCAR NGOS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTAT ION FOR BENEFIT CONTINUATION NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZAT IONS IN AFRICA: CAN THEY INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY? IMPLEMENTING NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: REVIEW ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS TO NGO STRATEGIC ACT LITERATURE REVIEW ORGANIZATIONS: GUIDELINES FOR DON METHODOLOGY UNDERSTANDING VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS: EXPANDING THEIR DEV ELOPMENT ROLE DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND AGROFORESTRY RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS NGOS, GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE VOLUNTARY INCREASING NGO INVOLVEMENT IN FORESTRY INTERMEDIARY NGOS: THE SUPPORT ING LINK IN GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: DEMOCRATIZING DEVELOPMENT: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN ORGANIZATIONS THE GREENING OF AID: SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT: RECONCILING NORTH- PRACTICE PROTECTING THE AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT AND ADVOCACY AGENDA FOR SOUTH PERSPECTIVES A RESEARCH AND SOUTHERN AFRICA COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT BY MOBISQUADS IN GHANA SONS FROM THE BABAN RAFI FOREST, NIGER ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS: AFRICAN NGOS IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA: NATURAL RESOURCES: LES RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: AGROFORESTRY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA NGOS AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GAMBIA PEOPLE AND TREES: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL FORESTRY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOP DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS OF PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZAT IONS EXPANDING THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN MENT FORESTRY PROGRAMS NGOS AND THE LARGE AID DONORS: NATIONAL THE TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT MAINSTREAMING MAJOR DONOR CHANGING FORESTRY IN AFRICA: LESSONS FROM SUPPORT FOR THIRD WORLD NGOS: GUIDELINES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE COLLABORATION IMPLEMENTATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY: LESSONS FROM INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACCELERATING INSTITUTIONAL DEVEL SURVEY OF U.S. PVOS WORKING IN AFRICA: PROJECTS WITH A OPMENT ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT DIVERSITY IN DEVELOPMENT: FORESTRY ASSISTANCE TO AFRICA WEST AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS AND VOLUNTEER TASKS FOR INTERNATIONAL AND INDIGENOUS NGOS: AN AGENDA OF FUTURE ORGANIZATIONS: PRIORITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP VIEWS FROM THE SOUTH MANAGING ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: AN OPERATIONAL APPROACH GETTING TO THE 21ST CENTURY: VOLUNTARY ACTION AND THE GLOBAL AGENDA THIRD GENERATION NGO STRATEGIES: A KEY TO PEOPLE-CENTERED DEVE LOPMENT A DIRECTORY OF ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON TREE PLANTING AND WOODFUEL CONSERVATION IN KENYA ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GOVERNMENTAL AND COLLABORATING TO PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: VOICES F-RELIANCE: AN APPRAISAL OF BOOK: CONDUCTING PRAS IN KENYA INDIGENOUS NGOS: LIBERATION, SELF FROM AFRICA AND DEVELOP MENT APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATORY TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT: VOICES NIZATIONS MULTI- ARY AID FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGA DEVELOPMENT: A CASE INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES TO PARTICIPATION IN ZIMBABWE PARTICIPATORY RURAL RE STUDY FROM SENEGAL GOVERNING THE COMMONS: THE EVOLUTION OF INSTITUTIONS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION DESIGNS FOR COLLAB ORATION: A STUDY OF PVO/NGO UMBRELLA PROJECTS IN AFRICA PARTNERSHIP AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN NATURAL RE LEARNED? NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: THE SAHEL STRENGTHENING THE POOR: SOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL STRENGTHENING FOR DEVELOPMENT MAN WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS. AND THE WORLD BANK: COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA, AGING DEVELOPMENT: STATE, SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS NGO COORDINATING BODIES IN AFRICA ASIA, AND LATIN AMERICA A DIRECTORY: NGOS IN THE FORESTRY SECTOR LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL
DEVEL OPMENT: ANALYTICAL SOURCE BOOK WITH CASES A GROWING ROLE FOR NGOS IN DEVELOP MENT

ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORT FOR NGOs AND NRM IN AFRICA

by

William Booth

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE 3

SCOPE AND SCALE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS' INVOLVEMENT 4

FURTHER ANALYSIS 8

"Whenever you are in doubt...apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny?" *Mahatma Gandhi*

INTRODUCTION

The Africa Bureau of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as part of its analytic agenda, is assessing the Bureau's experience in working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Specifically, it is analyzing its effectiveness in strengthening NGOs doing natural resource management (NRM) in Africa.

This issue paper, which focuses on international organizations such as United Nations agencies and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), is part of a background study. It will be used as a basis for discussion at a November 1992 conference.

Since the mid-1980s, the development world has witnessed the rapid evolution of the two issues relevant to this study, namely the importance which donors and development agencies are assigning to the role of NGOs, and the global concern for natural resource management and sustainable development.

This is a critical time in the debate of both of these issues. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank have begun emphasizing the importance of integrating NGOs into the planning process for national programs and National Environmental Action Plans (NEAPs). NGOs, for their part, are signalling that they are no longer satisfied to be the messengers of donors and governments to the local population, but are requesting equal partnership in the development process. The recent UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) has helped to focus the world's attention on global environmental issues.

This paper attempts to raise some of the critical issues which need to be addressed by donors and development agencies if NGOs are to gain the skills and credibility required to perform an ever-broadening range of activities being demanded of them in the development process. Concern for maintaining the natural resources base of the planet, while addressing the expanding needs of a growing population, make it necessary for donors to find ways to cooperate more fully.

The development agenda has continued to be defined by donors and development agencies. Their structures, management systems, and contracting regulations impede the already challenging task of working with a diverse and expanding body of non-governmental and community-based organizations (CBOs).

It is this same constituency, however, which provides one solution to this increasingly complex problem. By integrating NGOs into the decision-making process, we shift the human and

intellectual resources which are presently at the bottom to the top of the development pyramid. By doing so, natural resource users are provided with a stake and vested interest in their sustainable development. Lasting reform could come about if NGOs were allowed continued and constant scrutiny of the NRM process. Donors and development organizations can help by focusing attention on specific sectors and/or key countries.

While systemic change is not likely to occur in the short term, it must remain a priority long-term goal, while more immediate concerns are addressed. Donors must take the lead in assuring the collaboration between governments and NGOs.

To be effective, such a plan would require improved communications and information exchange. One resource which presently exists is the Common Exchange Format for Development Activity (CEFDA). This information databank, established on the initiative of USAID, ACCIS, IDRC, and UNDP, is located at the International Development and Research Council (IDRC) in Ottawa and is available on CD ROM through subscription. Further development and study are required to assure that it becomes a valuable resource for all development partners.

USAID can continue to play a major role in this process by: 1) continued support of information exchange; 2) continued funding to support PVO and NGO partnerships; 3) continued small grants funding to NGOs; and 4) continued support to improved donor collaboration.

The November conference will provide a suitable opportunity to plot NGO and donor progress in Natural Resources Management, marking accomplishments and shortcomings while providing a forum to discuss strategies on which to build in the next century.

With the goal of using NGOs as partners in natural resources management, three key issues should be considered:

1. An increasing demand for assistance from a growing array of participants and problems points to the need for development partners to agree on a definition of Natural Resources Management to improve communications, encourage cooperation of donor agencies, avoid duplication, and prevent waste of scarce resources.

2. There is a growing recognition of the crucial role which NGOs can and do play in promoting sustainable development while respecting the natural resource base of the country; for example, community-based self-help project initiatives, not high-tech, high-budget projects have had the greatest success in preserving natural resources and promoting sustainable development in Africa. NGOs and donors must decide how they will work together and how donors will assure long-term institutional and technical support.

3. It is clear that information technology has an increasingly important role to play in the process of connecting people with one another and with resources on the local, national, regional and global scale.

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Before planning future direction it is important to briefly recall the evolution of NGO and donor participation in NRM in Africa. In 1984 the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided funding for the establishment of the International Tree Project Clearing House (ITPC) under the auspices of the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service.

This funding was used: 1) to convene a number of subregional consultations involving UN agencies, governments and NGOs to discuss desertification and reforestation; 2) to establish a database of NGOs active in these activities; 3) to publish a newsletter; and 4) to publish French and English language editions of "NGOs In the Forestry Sector in Africa."

Since 1986 there has been a growing recognition among multilateral donors such as UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank of the increasingly important role which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can and do play in the process of national recovery and development.

This increased emphasis on the role of NGOs received impetus when an NGO spokesperson was invited to speak to a Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations to address the drought in sub-Saharan Africa. This singular honor was bestowed upon an African NGO representative and was the first time in the UN's 41-year history that a nongovernmental representative addressed the General Assembly. It was through the forementioned directories that 30 indigenous African NGOs were identified and invited to attend a parallel NGO session at the UN to provide evidence of the range and extent of their activities.

At about the same time the Industry Council for Development (ICD), a private sector consortium of multinational corporations, in collaboration with international organizations such as CARE and with the financial support of UNDP, established the Sahel Information Network (SIS).

This database contains project information from NGOs active in the environmental sector in four West African countries, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Senegal. USAID contributed financially to this network through a grant to United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO).

During this period UN-NGLS was convening quarterly meetings for donors such as USAID, CIDA, World Bank and relevant UN agencies as well as Northern development agencies such as CARE, WRI, Bahai International Community, CODEL, and EIL, in an effort to share information concerning projects, programs and policies related to natural resources management.

In the months following the UN Special Session, UNDP and IBRD were among the international donor organizations to create NGO programs. The World Bank also established a standing NGO Advisory Committee. In the intervening years we have seen a proliferation of such programs within various donor and development agencies. While other bilateral donors such as Canada and various members of the EEC have followed suit, USAID has not done so.

During this same Special Session, the Canadian delegation announced that they were prepared to establish a five-million-dollar fund, to be administered by UNDP, which would provide

financial support to community groups, non-governmental organizations, and training and research institutes seeking to combat environmental degradation and promote environmentally sustainable development in Africa. Implemented in 1988, this project is active in 13 African countries. The PVO/NGO Natural Resources Management program, financed by USAID, was established at about the same time.

In the next five years donor support for Natural Resources Management continued. USAID and CIDA provided funding for two seminars, in Washington and Quebec City, which included representatives of these two agencies, African NGOs, PVOs, NGOs, and UN agencies who discussed donor collaboration and NGO partnership.

There have been numerous other related initiatives up to and including the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, and the implementation of Agenda 21 within UNDP.

Donor support for NGOs and NRM has developed and expanded during this same time frame. All major funding sources now provide resources to the informal or non-governmental sector to carry out NRM related activities. This has expanded to include what has come to be referred to as "popular participation," a concept which evolved from a conference in Arusha, Tanzania in 1989. Now community-based organizations (CBOs), community development organizations (CDOs), womens groups, youth organizations, unemployed groups, and labor organizations, among others, are accommodated under this broad definition.

SCOPE AND SCALE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS' INVOLVEMENT

Issues

1. An increasing demand for assistance from a growing array of participants and problems points to the need for development partners to agree on a definition of Natural Resources Management to improve communications, encourage cooperation of donor agencies, avoid duplication, and prevent waste of scarce resources.

It is not the intent of this paper to provide an exhaustive inventory of NRM initiatives across the continent; however, it is possible to identify those sectors which are presently receiving funding. These include: 1) NRM project funding; 2) small grants programs; 3) network building; and 4) information collection and dissemination.

Increasingly, donors and development agencies have been the catalyst for identifying and supporting the crucial role which local authorities, NGOs and CBOs play in promoting sustainable development, while respecting the natural resources base of each country and region.

While donor and development agency policies toward cooperation with NGOs may be sound, often many of these policies are not practiced in the field. All too often field offices and

missions are tied too closely to governments and there is little real collaboration with the NGO community.

However, the key partners in this important process continue to work independently. The agenda continues to be largely driven by donors and other development agencies since they possess, or have access to, many of the resources required to bring about this necessary change.

It should be noted that the United Nations is an intergovernmental body, which means that historically and traditionally its agencies work with governmental bodies. The World Bank is just that, a bank, which is in the business of lending money at a profit to governments. Even though these institutions have created NGO divisions or programs, their mechanisms make it difficult to work with or directly fund non-governmental organizations.

Most multi and bilateral organizations have a national presence in the form of a field office, mission, information office, etc. In the case of the United Nations and USAID these local offices have a certain degree of autonomy and independence. Many of the programs which address NGOs have been created in "headquarters."

This presents a number of problems which include: 1) centralized programs that leave the national office out of the loop; 2) field offices that are expected to administer programs over which they have had no say in the design phase; 3) field office perception that they lack sufficient information on certain NGO programs; 4) field offices that do not always share the same degree of commitment to NGO involvement in projects and programs as the centralized NGO division; 5) field offices that are used to dealing directly with government ministries and not with local people; 6) government NGO policies that differ from country to country, making it difficult for field offices to apply a centralized program or policy locally across the continent.

What is required is a paradigm shift in which the resources at the bottom are brought to the top. The voice, experience, traditions and needs of those charged with maintaining the natural resources base must be integrated into the process of establishing priorities and national plans. They require the necessary tools and resources to carry out the task, while using existing resources in an economical and sustainable manner.

In order to effect such a shift, donors and development agencies must evaluate their policies and practices, including the nature of the technical assistance being provided. This must be done in collaboration with all partners and will involve a process of "reverse technical assistance" or a "bottom-up approach."

In order to become a truly effective proponent of sustainable development, donors and development agencies must effect changes in several areas which include: 1) adopting a policy of open disclosure for NRM projects and programs; 2) disseminating information on donor-related projects more openly and freely; 3) assessing the impact of donor projects on poverty; 4) expanding their role in advocacy; 5) developing, in collaboration with other agencies, a focus on human as well as economic development; 6) mainstreaming their NGO relationships by making cooperation with NGOs an integral part of regional and country programs; 7) evaluating

structures and capacities (both centrally and in the field) in order to see how they can work more effectively.

2. There is a growing recognition of the crucial role which NGOs can and do play in promoting sustainable development while respecting the natural resource base of the country; for example, community-based self-help project initiatives, not high-tech, high-budget projects have had the greatest success in preserving natural resources and promoting sustainable development in Africa. NGOs and donors must decide how they will work together and how donors will assure long-term institutional and technical support.

The groundwork for true development is expanding impressively in many regions as poor people organize themselves to fight poverty and environmental decline. Indeed, the accelerating proliferation of self-help groups is one of the most heartening trends on the poverty front.

The focus of true development is to improve the quality of life of people, especially the poor and those living on the margin of subsistence. These persons are often forced by economic need to damage the natural resource base on which they and others depend for survival.

There is an urgent need for those who have the expertise and other kinds of resources to approach questions of natural resources management from the perspective of the people's right and need to meet their basic needs.

On the other hand, the local people and groups working to develop themselves must understand the local biological and physical systems and assist in maintaining the delicate balance that is critical to maintaining their own life-support system.

There is increasing awareness in the donor community that community-based self-help project initiatives, not high-tech, high-budget projects, have had the greatest successes in preserving natural resources and promoting "sustainable development" in Africa.

There is a general consensus among development partners that building on their grass-roots experience, NGOs perform an important service in catalyzing and supporting positive change. Increasingly, NGOs are unwilling to be the vehicle for information sharing and are seeking to be equal partners in the development process.

To do this, they must be provided with the credibility and resources to develop their capacities to effect and contribute to national policies on sustainable development. They could also assist multilateral financial and development agencies to modify policies and practices that contribute to poverty or harm the environment.

This will require a number of changes which donors and development agencies can support including: 1) improving government-NGO relations; 2) resolving conflicts between economic and environmental priorities; 3) strengthening information and information sharing among all development partners; 4) providing the means to communicate more effectively at the local level to enable populations to know and understand the issues; 5) involving NGOs in the process of

monitoring programs and issues; 6) strengthening involvement of local communities; 7) strengthening NGO coordination; 8) strengthening research and technical capabilities; 9) strengthening NGOs to be more effective partners with governments in implementing policies and practices; 10) supporting institutions of the civil society; 11) signalling governments that national programs must be developed with the participation of a broad range of groups; 12) promoting exchanges, information and dialogue among different sectors; 13) cooperating with NGOs in efforts to free resources absorbed by structural adjustment in order to promote and support sustainable development; 14) "mainstreaming" cooperation with NGOs to assure that they benefit not only from small grants programs but also from initiatives under country-funded programs.

3. It is clear that information technology has an increasingly important role to play in the process of connecting people with one another and with resources on the local, national, regional and global scale.

Given the diverse nature of donors and development agencies, their policies and mechanisms for funding, it is essential that steps be taken to collaborate and to share information to increase impact and effectiveness while decreasing duplication and waste. Discussions, such as those that will take place during the "USAID's Effectiveness Working With NGOs Doing NRM in Africa" conference, are a good point of departure.

However, as we have seen from several previous conferences, these discussions are, by themselves, insufficient to bring about the required change. Mechanisms need to be established and put in place which will assure an ongoing dialogue not only at headquarters, but also in field offices across the continent.

The UN can and must perform a key role in this process. It has the ear and the mechanisms required to bring such discussions into the international arena to further develop and refine the policies and methods required to implement such change. USAID can and must encourage this dialogue for change through its active and ongoing participation.

One must remain realistic. While these changes are essential to assure long-term sustainable development, institutional change is a slow and cumbersome process. National and institutional agendas do not always mesh conveniently. Therefore, we must also consider change in the short and medium term which can address immediate needs and enhance already existing programs.

Although some "donor roundtables" exist, there is a lack of donor mechanisms to assure and facilitate communication and collaboration among the various donor and development agencies.

However, one very important resource has been created within the last year: The Common Exchange Format for Development Activity (CEFDA). This electronic network of donor and NGO project information provides development partners with one means of assuring that their contribution to economic and social development is more effective.

FURTHER ANALYSIS

Some possible avenues which could be considered by USAID to add incrementally to the activities being funded by the WB, UN, and other development agencies include: 1) identify and review programs and projects presently receiving funding, such as Africa 2000, PVO/NGO NRMs, to enhance NGO/donor cooperation in NRM in Africa; 2) identify and review regional and subregional policies and programs such as RAF; 3) reach consensus on a NRM definition so as to compliment each others efforts; 4) identify the kinds of NGOs with which it wants to cooperate; an increased flow of resources has spawned an increase in NGOs created by entrepreneurs and government officials; 5) expand its relationship from traditional environment and development NGOs to work with peoples' organizations working to benefit women, poor and other disadvantaged elements of society; 6) expand activities that could benefit sustainable development with NGOs such as PVO/NGO NRMs; 7) build on the experience of PVO/NGO partnerships to strengthen local NGOs; 8) provide small grants funding which enables local community groups to become involved in the development process and to promote NGO-government cooperation; 9) encourage cooperation among government extension agents, research centers, universities, training centers and NGOs; and 10) develop and disseminate information concerning southern-based technology.

African NGO Perspective

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN CAMEROON: AN AFRICAN NGOS ENVIRONMENT NETWORK; AN INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION PRIVATE VOLUNTARY INITIATIVES: ENHANCING THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO NGO NEEDS RESOURCES FOR DEVEL OPMENT: BARRIERS TO INCREASED PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS THE MANAGEMENT NEEDS OF RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW MADAGASCAR NGOS AND NATURAL DEVELOPMENT: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTAT ION FOR BENEFIT CONTINUATION NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZAT IONS IN AFRICA: CAN THEY INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY? IMPLEMENTING NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT POLICY IN AFRICA: A DOCUMENT AND LITERATURE REVIEW ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS TO NGO STRATEGIC ACT IONS: GUIDELINES FOR DON ORS VOLUNTARY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS EXPANDING THEIR DEV ELOPMENT ROLE IN KENYA FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PRIVATE VOLUNTARY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN NGOS, GOVERNMENT AND AGROFORESTRY RESEARCH ORGANIZATION INITIATIVES PROJECT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZAT INCREASING NGO INVOLVEMENT IN FORESTRY INTERMEDIARY NGOS: THE SUPPORT ING LINK IN GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT DEMOCRATIZING DEVELOPMENT: NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS THE GREENING OF AID: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN PRACTICE PROTECTING THE AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT: AND SOUTHERN AFRICA COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AFRICAN NGOS IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA: RECONCILING NORTH- IN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES: LES POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN RAFI FOREST, NIGER ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING AND SONS FROM THE BABAN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA NGOS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS OF PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZAT ANCE AGENCIES PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS IN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: AGROFORESTRY BY MOBISQUADS IN GHANA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GAMBIA PEOPLE AND TREES: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL FORESTRY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOP MENT DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS OF PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS AND IONS EXPANDING THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NATIONAL FORESTRY PROGRAMS NGOS AND THE LARGE AID DONOR CHANGING THE TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT MAINSTREAMING MAJOR DONOR SUPPORT FOR THIRD WORLD NGOS: GUIDELINES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE COLLABORATION IMPLEMENTATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY: LESSONS FROM INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACCELERATING INSTITUTIONAL DEVEL OPMENT SURVEY OF U.S. PVOS WORKING IN AFRICA: PROJECTS WITH A FORESTRY OR ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT DIVERSITY IN DEVELOPMENT: VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE TO AFRICA WEST AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS AND U.S. VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS: PRIORITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP AN AGENDA OF FUTURE TASKS FOR INTERNATIONAL AND INDIGENOUS NGOS: VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: AN OPERATIONAL APPROACH GETTING TO THE 21ST CENTURY: VOLUNTARY ACTION AND THE VIEWS FROM THE SOUTH MANAGING NGO STRATEGIES: A KEY TO PEOPLE-CENTERED GLOBAL AGENDA THIRD GENERATION NGO STRATEGIES FOR PLANTING AND DEVELOPMENT, A DIRECTORY OF ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON TREE GOVERNMENT AND NGO WOODFUEL CONSERVATION IN KENYA ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT AND NGO NON-GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: SELF-RELIANCE AND DEVELOP COLLABORATING PRAS IN KENYA INDIGENOUS NGOS: LIBERATION, PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL HAND BOOK: CONDUCTING PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT VOICES FROM AFRICA VOLUNT MENT APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATORY TECHNOLOGY DEVEL OPMENT: A CASE ARY AID FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES TO PARTICIPATION IN NATURAL RESOURCES: THE EVOLUTION STUDY FROM SENEGAL GOVERNING THE COMMONS: LESSONS FOR COLLAB OF INSTITUTIONS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION DESIGNS FOR COLLABORATIVE ORATION: A STUDY OF PVO/NGO UMBRELLA PROJECTS IN AFRICA PARTNERSHIP AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN NATURAL RE SOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL STRENGTHENING THE POOR: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE WORLD BANK: COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT MAN AGING DEVELOPMENT: STATE, SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS NGO COORDINATING BODIES IN AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA A DIRECTORY: NGOS IN THE FORESTRY SECTOR LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL DEVEL OPMENT: ANALYTICAL SOURCE BOOK WITH CASES A GROWING ROLE FOR NGOS IN DEVELOP MENT

USAID AND PVO/NGO IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA:

ELEMENTS OF AN ASSESSMENT FROM THE AFRICAN NGO PERSPECTIVE

by

Carolyn Njuki

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND 1

ISSUES AND PRIORITIES 2

SUMMARY 5

AREAS FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS 6

RECOMMENDATIONS 6

AN ISSUES AND PRIORITIES PAPER FOR A CONFERENCE ON USAID'S EFFECTIVENESS WORKING WITH NGOs DOING NRM IN AFRICA

BACKGROUND

During the last decade, resource managers, scientists, governments and NGOs have expressed a growing concern for the ecological changes taking place on the continent Africa. The need to conserve and improve the natural resource base has become imperative. Development agencies have undertaken projects that require technical knowledge about the ecology and the environment. Extreme poverty has been proven to be tied to the eroding ecosystem. Climatic changes, population explosion, large movements of people from one area to another, overcropping, deforestation, and disappearing grasslands and water supplies, are problems directly linked to food production. These problems are nowhere more acute than in Africa, where much of the land is particularly vulnerable to ecological degradation. Much of the continent is covered with desert or semi-desert soil, steep slopes with shallow soils, or damaged low-fertility soil. Approximately thirty-four percent of Africa is under threat of desertification. Crop residues and animal manure that used to provide manure to soils are being used for fuel, and herds have moved to forest areas as need for cultivating land increases.

To address the present ecological and environment crisis situation in Africa, international and local NGOs, with cooperation from USAID are working in the area of sustainability, ecological preservation, natural resource management, agroforestry and the like. Many projects in Africa deal with agroforestry which can be defined as: a sustainable land and crop management system that strives to increase yields on a continuing basis by combining the production of woody forest crops (including fruit and other crops) with cultivated or field crops and/or annuals, simultaneously or sequentially on the same unit of land, and applying management practices that are compatible with the cultural practices of the local population.

The development community is working with local farmers and grass-roots groups who have for centuries accumulated experience of interaction with the environment without access to scientific information, external inputs, capital credit or development markets. These African farmers and pastoralists have practiced systems of land use compatible with their environment and population density. Nomads have wandered in search of grazing, while farmers used to practice shifting cultivation. Problems started when populations exploded and the pressure on the land became severe. Traditional systems of land use have been put under so much strain that the land can no longer sustain food production. The recognition of the value of combining trees with crops and livestock as a means of conserving soil, increasing multiple use capacity of the land, rehabilitating degraded sites, and diversification to reduce risk is leading development workers to consider using these old methods with improvements based on modern research.

ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

The primary issue to address in this paper is how USAID can improve its effectiveness in working with NGOs implementing natural resource management (NRM) projects and programs in Africa. Three priority areas are to be addressed in this paper, chosen randomly due to the nature of their importance and relation to other development issues. The three issues addressed here do not in any way suggest that they are the only or primary areas of concern that can lead to improved effectiveness. However, USAID can greatly improve effectiveness and coordination in the areas of:

- **Natural Resource Management**
- **Women in Training**
- **Agriculture**

Natural Resource Management

USAID has been engaged in the area of conservation and natural resource management in Africa. A number of projects in Africa that address natural resource management components are managed by NGOs. These organizations play an important part in the overall development process, particularly at the grass-roots level. Their role is critical in providing organizational and technical assistance in projects that are innovative and people-oriented. Occasionally, NGOs are misinformed or lack knowledge in approaches to development. Technologies and approaches used sometimes, may have viability and replicability, but are disparate and unliked to other efforts, and thus not communicated to the larger development community. Unfortunately, the role of NGOs in the international context has not been properly addressed.

A major issue therefore is to ensure that the international organizations like USFS, UNDP, FAO, and USAID amongst others enhance the work of NGOs in development work, particularly as they attempt to address both conservation and development issues. Such coordination will be a good complement to other work done by local and international NGOs in Africa. There are some ongoing activities initiated by USAID in Africa, for example, the PVO-NGO/NRMS (Natural Resource Management) Project. The Agency also works with U.S.-based NGOs such as CARE, African Development Foundation and CODEL, to name a few. The whole question of conservation and rational utilization is being considered and acted upon to gather with numerous NGOs. Production without loss is a key to sustainable agriculture. The ability to boost production without creating further ecological denigration is a major deal.

Aid under the umbrella of the PVO-NGO/NRMS has initiated ecological projects working with various groups in-country to implement projects in Madagascar, Mali, Cameroon, and Uganda. Such projects involve local NGOs who work very closely with the indigenous people to plan the implementation of ecological projects. Lessons learned in project implementation show that unless beneficiaries know and accept a project, its chances for failure are great. One approach

has been to use workshops which sensitizes beneficiaries on the scope of work expected. Workshop results show them benefits of the projects, as well as potential losses if change does not take place.

USAID has assisted a project in Botswana where, through funds transmitted through CODEL, the YWCA of Botswana has started a Woodlot/Tree Planting project. The environmental catastrophe of drought and desertification in Africa are well known. The problems faced by many, particularly women, to access water and firewood is a known fact. The supply of wood which has disappeared as the need for fuel increases has been the prime cause for desertification. The women in the community identified access to wood as a problem that needed priority consideration. With funds from USAID, combined with other resources, a wood lot has been planted.

USAID resources have been used in Ghana to implement a very successful tree-growing campaign that has spread from schools, to the community and to the government. Here, in the Brong-Ahafo region, a gradual change has taken place in the vegetation during the last 20 years. Forest reserves are being turned into secondary forests and grasses are competing with cocoa trees. Observing this change, the diocese of Sunyani started planting tree nurseries in a number of places in the diocese which were given to the communities. The project has been so successful that they now have tree-planting competitions and the whole diocese is involved in the project. As of now, over one million tree seedlings have been distributed.

Women and Training

To address the problem of environmental degradation, USAID realizes the importance of the key role that women play. Women play a major role in fuel collection, which is often a factor in deforestation and land degradation. Many times, they are responsible for water supplies, sanitation, and the processing of forest and other agricultural products. Besides their knowledge, women have good community organizing skills which are an important part of innovative solutions to problems. However, the greatest contribution to natural resource management by women to environmental preservation is their vested interest in conserving the resource base which they depend on daily.

USAID focuses its resources on local environmental problems by tapping the leadership skills and the knowledge of local women in environmental and natural resource management. Emphasis on development and increased technical and professional capacity among women in environmental issues is a priority. In Zaire, eight women's groups located in one area are focusing on the improvement of cultivation practices. These women travel to different areas to compare cultivation practices for forests and savannah soils and also receive technical training to work as extension workers.

In Rwanda, women are involved in a project that offers training and research in agroforestry, natural forest management, integrated fish culture, soil conservation, and in environmental planning, while in Kenya, a local NGO working with community institutions has installed a well

that serves 100 households. Women's groups have rehabilitated a reservoir, constructed a fence and planted trees and grasses to prevent soil erosion in this same project. Funds for the implementation of these projects came from USAID.

Water harnessing is a women's priority in Africa. Unfortunately, sources have become polluted by the growing industrial waste, and streams have dried up through overuse or changes in the climate. To address this problem a community in Zimbabwe has implemented a water project to save women the tedious work of walking miles in search of water. Tied into this project is a nutrition and community development project for women in the community. A local women's group, together with assistance from a local NGO and with funding from CODEL (via their grant with USAID), has successfully implemented these projects.

Agriculture

The question of food supply in Africa is on the NGOs' primary list of what to do in the area of development in Africa. With population explosion, droughts, man-made disasters and the like, Africa is faced with enormous food shortages. Farmers, and in many instances women who grow 90% of the food, have been marginalized. Governments have kept food prices in many African countries artificially low to keep the urban minority happy, and so the agricultural sector has been neglected. The situation has been further complicated by the fact that agricultural production has to contribute to the earning of foreign exchange.

Other problems have come about when good agricultural land has been saved or converted to cash crops, thus neglecting food crops. There also has been a misuse of land, so that capable agricultural land has not been put to maximum use. In addition, much agricultural land has not made use of proper irrigation methods, new technologies, or better-yielding seeds, nor has there been an effort to use soil improvement methods.

Research institutions are many times operated by governments and work in isolation away from the farmers, who do not get access to information being generated by the researchers. On the policy level, farmers are not involved although they are more informed on the realities of what is happening in the agricultural sector. Extension workers do not work with the farmers' family as a unit, although the whole family is part and parcel of the farm production unit. There is a lack of interaction and understanding between scientific centers, government agricultural departments and farmers' groups. Because of this lack of understanding and the poor interaction, there is a suspicion on the farmers' part of anyone or group from outside their midst. Therefore, even the little effort made to reach the farmers' group is often met with resistance on the part of farmers. USAID together with NGOs should therefore undertake replicable programs, which guarantee the important participation of farmers in activities to improve sustainable long-term productivity and food security. These programs should typically provide community-based farmers' groups with credit and technical inputs for the development of micro enterprises and food production for local and regional markets.

USAID and NGOs should increase awareness among farmers on policy issues that affect them, the importance of their involvement in decision making, their need to access new resources, technologies, improved seeds, soil input, training, how to access credit and markets, and how to increase production/yields. Most importantly, USAID and NGOs should work with farmers, listen to them, while at the same time leading them into the new agricultural era and away from the old systems, which are no longer productive.

Examples of projects and programs that can help us understand how to go forward follow:

- A water and nutrition project is being implemented in a very arid region of Zimbabwe, where bore holes have been sunk for water for home use, as well as for irrigation of agricultural produce. To facilitate the development of Rujeko village, a reliable supply of water has been made available. This water supply has helped initiate programs in vegetable gardening, reforestation and environmental sanitation.

- In Kenya, a USAID/NGO Food Security Program aims to improve the nutrition at the level of beneficiaries through the integration of improved farming and livestock management technologies. Local women will be trained and they will train others in better nutritional and farming methods.

- In Zambia, a youth project aims at assisting a youth group turn a vegetable gardening and maize-mill operation into income-generating activities.

SUMMARY

The purpose of identifying the above three priorities has been to show how the planned activities enhances the current trend of development, and to encourage this type of directed and future-oriented development. It is believed that if the beneficiaries become sensitized to the root causes of the present problems, they will in a better position to address these problems before they become immense. If people are aware of the cause and effect of their problems, they will understand and appreciate this and act accordingly. In other words, knowledge imparted is necessary for identification of problems and sustainability of a project.

It is also important to keep in mind that development is an inexact science. Successful projects are not always the outcome. Africa is a continent of many moods. There are floods which may destroy years of dedicated planning and implementation in one night; political changes take place with much regularity, and each party brings its own priority; there are droughts where plants fail; and beneficiaries may neglect planned activities to look for activities that enhance their own survival. Sometimes there is decidedly poor planning. Therefore, while the main goal is to achieve planned goals and objectives, facts beyond our control have to be taken into account.

AREAS FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

USAID has been sensitized to the inefficiency of the political machinery in providing services in Africa. Realizing that NGOs can be a crucial ally in the economic and social transformation of the continent, USAID has opted to direct funds to U.S. and local NGOs to carry out a number of projects in Africa. Some of the examples cited in this paper clearly show USAID's determination in working with NGOs in order to reach planned goals and objectives. While the working relationship between USAID and NGOs is improving, there still remains a challenge to USAID and African governments to make room for the NGO sector at the policy level. More times than not, NGOs are more in touch with realities in a country, they are usually more trusted by the grass-roots people they serve, and are more willing to listen and try to work out projects that governments would not have time to try out or would try out at greater expense. Although NGOs and governments operate in a different manner, their purpose in social and economic development are very similar. This should provide USAID a point to start with an inclusive process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- More emphasis is needed in strengthening relationships with local NGOs
- Training in conservation methods
- Creating alternative sources of energy
- Teaching the relationships between conservation and its bearing on daily survival
- Exchange programs between the south
- South-to-south technology transfer
- Less emphasis on research, and development of available indigenous knowledge
- Emphasis on the inclusion of women at policy level
- More funds directed towards women's programs
- Integrated programs that address problems not as an entity, but as a part of a larger problem

Specifically,

1. USAID should seek out existing local NGOs and learn more about the work, interests, and experience of these local NGOs and assist them to strengthen their work, and wherever

possible form partnerships with local NGOs. USAID should also learn and understand the mechanism of how local NGOs work so as to establish a suitable working relationship, for example, less paperwork and rigid regulations.

2. USAID should begin by training and sensitizing communities, schools and NGOs in counting on the need for conservation, before actual conservation methods are taught. Without the understanding of why there is a need for conservation, and without further alternatives provided, people will continue to destroy the environment. The NRM project should be expanded to reach more local NGOs.

3. Without alternative methods of energy, for example, solar fuel-conserving stoves, woodlots, cheap electricity, etc., trees will be cut at the present alarming rate. USAID needs to look at alternative sources of energy which local NGOs could promote in their localities.

4. USAID, with the assistance of local NGOs and governments, should embark on an Africa-wide training exercise, teaching people the relationship between conservation and daily survival. This can be done by showing videos, films, and providing workshop plays, suitable for different countries or localities.

5. With relationships formed between local NGOs and USAID there should be exchange programs between the south, especially where programs are replicable .

6. There are a number of new technologies which have been developed in the south. These technologies are not known or available to all countries. An effort should be made to collect information on all these available technologies, so that local NGOs will know of their presence and can use them if possible.

7. USAID should limit its emphasis on researching new technologies, and concentrate on developing existing indigenous knowledge and available technologies. When this is accomplished, this knowledge should be made available to local NGOs.

8. Past experience has indicated that women are agents of change. Unfortunately, women are not involved in decision making at the policy level. For a successful transformation from deployment to conservation, USAID, NGOs, and governments must make a concentrated effort, not to just pay lip service, but to ensure the participation at the decision-making level.

9. While women are responsible for implementation of projects, most times funds are generally not directed to them. Even when a project is specifically a women's project, funds are often times handled by men. This situation leaves women with very few resources to carry out the planned goals and objectives. USAID and NGOs should therefore ensure that fair amounts of funds are equally marked for women or that funds set aside for are used by them.

10. USAID and NGOs should understand that all programs are interrelated, and address them as such; for example, population has a connection to agriculture, conservation, health education, housing, etc. It is therefore very important for a successful program to look at all sectors before addressing a particular problem.

U.S. - Based PVO Perspective

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN
CAMEROON: AN INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION
NETWORK: INITIATIVES: ENHANCING THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S
VOLUNTARY TO RESPOND TO NGO NEEDS
CAPACITY PRIVATE RESOURCES FOR DEVEL
OPMENT: BARRIERS TO INCREASED PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT FOR
PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS MADAGASCAR NGOS AND NATURAL
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTAT
ION FOR BENEFIT CONTINUATION NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZAT
IONS IN AFRICA: CAN THEY INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY IN AFRICA: A DOCUMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT POLICY? IMPLEMENTING
LITERATURE REVIEW ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS TO NGO STRATEGIC ACT
ION UNDERSTANDING VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS: EXPANDING THEIR DON
ELOPMENT ROLE NGOS GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND AGROFORESTRY RESEARCH
METHODOLOGY IN KENYA FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PRIVATE VOLUNTARY
ORGANIZATION INITIATIVES PROJECT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS:
INCREASING NGO INVOLVEMENT IN FORESTRY INTERMEDIARY NGOS: THE SUPPORT
ING LINK IN GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DEMOCRATIZING DEVELOPMENT: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN
ORGANIZATIONS THE GREENING OF AID: SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT: RECONCILING NORTH-
PRACTICE PROTECTING THE AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT AND SOUTHERN AFRICA COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS
TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVES: A RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY AGENDA FOR
ANCE AGENCIES: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GAMBIA PEOPLE
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA NGOS AND
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN
AND TREES: THE BABAN RAFI FOREST, NIGER EXPERIENCE OF THE GAMBIA
MENT DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA NGOS AND
IONS EXPANDING THE ROLE OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN
NATIONAL FORESTRY PROGRAMS NGOS AND MAINSTREAMING MAJOR DONOR
CHANGING THE TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE
SUPPORT FOR THIRD WORLD NGOS: LESSONS FROM
COLLABORATION IMPLEMENTATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY: LESSONS FROM
INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACCELERATING INSTITUTIONAL DEVEL
OPMENT SURVEY OF U.S. PVOS WORKING IN AFRICA: PROJECTS WITH A
DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENT DIVERSITY IN DEVELOPMENT:
FORESTRY VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE TO AFRICA WEST AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS AND
U.S. VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT OR ENVIRONMENT: PRIORITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP
AN AGENDA OF FUTURE TASKS FOR INTERNATIONAL AND INDIGENOUS NGOS:
VOLUNTEER APPROACH GETTING TO THE 21ST CENTURY: VOLUNTARY ACTION AND THE
VIEWS FROM THE SOUTH MANAGING ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: AN
OPERATIONAL APPROACH GENERATION NGO STRATEGIES: A KEY TO PEOPLE-CENTERED
GLOBAL AGENDA THIRD DIRECTORY OF ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON TREE PLANTING AND
DEVELOPMENT A DIRECTORY ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENTAL AND NGO
WOODFUEL CONSERVATION IN KENYA OF NON-GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL HAND
NON-GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: LIBERATION, SELF-RELIANCE, AND DEVELOP
COLLABORATION IN NATURAL RESOURCES IN ZIMBABWE PARTICIPATORY VOICES FROM AFRICA VOLUNT
BOOK: CONDUCTING PRAS IN KENYA INDIGENOUS NGOS: THE EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY DEVEL ARY
APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A KEY TO OPMENT: A CASE
DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS:
AID FOR DEVELOPMENT THE COMMONS: THE EVOLUTION
INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES TO PARTICIPATORY TECHNOLOGY DEVEL
STUDY FROM SENEGAL GOVERNING THE COMMONS: A KEY TO OPMENT:
INSTITUTIONS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION DESIGNS FOR COLLAB
OF INSTITUTION: A STUDY OF PVO/NGO UMBRELLA PROJECTS IN AFRICA
PARTNERSHIP AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN NATURAL RE
SOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL STRENGTHENING THE POOR:
WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.
AND THE WORLD BANK: COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT MAN
AGING DEVELOPMENT: STATE, SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL
CONTEXTS NGO COORDINATING BODIES IN AFRICA,
ASIA, AND LATIN AMERICA A DIRECTORY:
NGOS IN THE FORESTRY SECTOR
LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL
DEVEL OPMENT:
ANALYTICAL SOURCE
BOOK WITH CASES
A GROWING ROLE FOR
NGOS IN DEVELOP
MENT

USAID AND PVO/NGOS IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA:

ELEMENTS OF AN ASSESSMENT FROM THE U.S. NGO PERSPECTIVE

by

Jonathan Otto

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

ISSUES 2

PRIORITIES 9

AREAS FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS 15

INTRODUCTION

This background paper is part of an extended assessment of the USAID Africa Bureau's experience in working with non-governmental organizations. This assessment will analyze the agency's effectiveness in strengthening NGOs doing natural resource management (NRM) activities in Africa. The first element of the overall assessment is a background study consisting of an annotated bibliography and four papers, of which this is one. This paper approaches the theme of USAID effectiveness in working with NGOs in NRM from the perspective of U.S.-based NGOs.

The framework of the paper was determined by the Forestry Support Program of the USDA Forest Service which initiated the analysis. It calls for an Issues section followed by a Priorities section, with the Priorities section organized into Goals, Purpose and Assumptions based on identified issues. These sections are to be followed by a final section, Areas for Further Analysis. All of this is to be presented in "bullet" form for easy access and discussion during the conference phase of the assessment.

The discipline of this framework, as well as the elliptical format has proven quite challenging. While the paper is meant to be provocative and critical of the policies and actions of key actors, its tight style is short on carefully couched qualifications and artfully argued explanations. The affect may appear unduly negative.

A lot of exciting and useful work is taking place in Africa in NRM under PVO/NGO management, with support and/or leadership from USAID and other international agencies. Examples include formation of national NRM coalitions, experiments in management of natural forests and buffer zones around protected areas, and improved agroforestry practices, to name a few. On the other hand, failures are all too common in the NRM work of both USAID and PVO/NGOs, and the potential widespread benefits of successful initiatives seem too rarely realized. This paper aims to help conferees look frankly at our flaws and foibles, and to move towards an analysis of what can be done about them.

Within the broad mandate of this background paper, the author opted to concentrate on just seven clusters of core topics pertaining to PVO/NGOs in their attempts to work in the area of natural resource management (NRM) in Africa. In the Issues section each topic is briefly discussed, followed by a series of illustrations. We begin with the definitional problem of NRM itself, then turn to three interwoven issue clusters of the on-the-ground context that PVO/NGOs face in working with resource users, rural communities and host governments. These contextual concerns give way to three clusters of issues that deal more with organizational matters among supporting institutions: effective collaboration and transfer of knowledge among NRM promoters, and donor-PVO/NGO relations in NRM.

In the Priorities section and the Areas for Future Analysis section we return to each of the seven topic clusters, suggesting approaches to better understanding and/or dealing with key obstacles and opportunities.

ISSUES

Conceptualizing "Natural Resource Management"

In Africa, natural resources are commonly considered to comprise both the physical and biological systems associated with agricultural lands, range lands, forests, and water. Integrated definitions of NRM could be constructed which define human use and impact of these resources. In practice, different stakeholders' concepts of NRM have been used to include or exclude, emphasize or de-emphasize various actions and actors, roles and responsibilities. The result is often a fractured, less holistic approach than is needed.

- A great divide has separated the conservation and development camps, for example, in the question of how best to conserve biological diversity or maintain forested lands; one side insists on barriers and poacher punishment, the other puts needs of local human populations first; a synthesis of approaches that might balance out to sustainable resource use has been slow in coming despite increasing interest on all sides.

- When mandated NRM spending targets were announced for the Development Fund for Africa, USAID experienced what one staff member called a cynical relabeling of every conceivable project, both current and planned, to meet the requirement; political expediency may have necessitated this reaction, but has the Africa Bureau subsequently developed and implemented a comprehensive and consistent NRM strategy and action plan?

- The USAID mission in one African country shelved a forest management project in favor of funding agricultural activity that promises increased productivity and exports; part of this new project is the tacit acceptance of cotton growing by farmers whose fields are steadily encroaching on officially designated national forests which the government cannot effectively protect.

- Another case of NRM trade-offs is the promotion of dry season gardening in semi-arid areas by PVO/NGOs and others; quantities of slow-growing, thorny plants are cut for fencing, and excessive water use for irrigation has lowered aquifers or reduced the availability of surface water for animals in some areas.

- In one West African country a powerful religious group recently clear cut a huge forest, felling five million trees in three weeks and evicting the pastoralist population; the USAID mission, which has NRM as a mainstay of its country strategy, as well as the PVO/NGO community, were strangely silent on the highly politicized destruction; only the World Bank, with NRM activities in the devastated area, openly criticized the action and the government's handling of it.

- In another African country where 50,000 hectares of the scarce remaining forests are lost annually, the Environmental Action Plan prepared under World Bank auspices proposes an investment of $43,500,000 which could grow to $75,000,000. Less than 3% of the

budget is allocated to natural forest management; building construction, water supply systems and infrastructure take precedence over forests in "environmental action."

- NRM work with PVO/NGOs is often defined by USAID and other donors to concern only actions with literal and visible connections to the environment, such as tree planing and agricultural production, even though PVO/NGOs in related fields make vital contributions; examples include the crucial work of CLUSA in organizing resource user groups and ATI's development and dissemination of technologies such as the manual ram press for oilseed processing that replaces wood-burning traditional methods and fuel-efficient jiko cookstoves; when donors' NRM pigeon holes are too small, many projects and services with high NRM impact don't fit, and collaboration is lost.

- A PVO/NGO umbrella project managed by USAID in an East African country had earmarked $1,000,000 for funding NRM activities, but spent only a small fraction of this earmark; mission staff were unsure why they had not attracted more NRM proposals, and the PVO/NGO community seemed unclear as to what USAID would be willing to fund in NRM.

Local Institution Strengthening: The Base of NRM

Among the constraints to improved NRM, the fundamental importance of institutions and institutional development is commonly underappreciated. Some of these are not institutions in the western sense, but more arrangements, conventions and understandings among resource users. Categories of these layered and intertwined institutions include:

- Formal groupings of local resource users, such as a fishermen's marketing group, a forest management cooperative or a women's gardening collective;

- Customary institutions, often not formally constituted, such as age groups and occupational groupings, and the leadership structure of the community itself;

- Self-help groups and community-based organizations (CBOs), both formal and informal, of modern origin that may form around specific resources or on the basis of affinities like region or extended family; and

- Rule systems and decision-making arrangements—whether or not codified and legally recognized—that serve as the institutional base for local resource exploitation, for example, customary land allocation systems, and the rule structures that govern the shared use of certain resources by pastoralist and sedentary farmers.

Entities of all kinds that come from outside local communities—PVO/NGOs, consulting firms, donors, African governments—as they attempt to intervene in NRM frequently ignore, discount, undermine and/or coopt such institutions. In the guise of project modalities, these outsiders typically impose their own rule systems which typically do not outlive their direct intervention.

In failing to understand and value local institutions and relationships, they unwittingly undermine the possibility for self-reliant, sustained improvement in resource management.

African Governments' Policies and Attitudes Towards Control of Resource Use, the Rights of Rural Resource Users, and the Role of PVO/NGOs.

Governmental institutions and the legislative framework governing resource use, often little changed since the colonial era, and the distorted and uneven application of laws and policies present high hurdles for PVO/NGOs attempting to improve rational resource use.

- Paramilitary-style national forestry services, their heavy-handed application of ambiguous forestry codes, and the resulting acrimonious relations between rural populations and government foresters create disincentives for compliance and discourage collaboration or necessary experimentation in NRM.

- Highly centralized, undemocratic governments and governance structures (again, continuing colonial patterns) that give little opportunity for decentralized local control of resources; the exceptions that prove this truism are demonstration projects designed by outsiders to test user-based NRM.

- Restrictions on freedom of association which prevent rural populations from legally constituting economic relationships outside of government-sanctioned structures, such as the imposed corporatistic structures of official youth, party, cooperative and women's institutions.

- Restrictions on the formation of national NGOs and on the registration of foreign PVO/NGOs, and regulations circumscribing the operations of both national and foreign PVO/NGOs; African governments, wary of independent agencies and jealous of the monopolistic authority they inherited, may impose strict limits on PVO/NGO activities they deem political, such as helping communities develop autonomous organizations necessary for NRM.

- Tenure codes that appropriate to the state all land and resources not formally titled; tenure codes which conflict with *de facto* customary local tenure systems, and which create disincentives for long-term investments and conservation by insecure resource users.

Popular Participation: Operational Imperative Rather Than Vague Slogan

Governments and development agencies alike insist that popular participation is the key to improved management of natural resources and a host of other development goals; however, genuine participation remains illusory in most NRM projects. It is a painstaking, time-consuming process that does not fit the typical project paradigm of design/implement/evaluate/close down, but rather requires a more organic and open-ended program approach.

- Governments use terms such as "mobilization" as code words for manipulation and unpaid labor in top-down efforts; with electoral democracy still absent or on fragile footing in most countries, free and willing participation in self-defined activities or organizations remains an unrealized ideal.

- PVO/NGOs are fond of "empowerment" for the communities they serve and often try to include beneficiaries in their project designs, yet the terms of engagement are set by the outsiders on a technical assistance model that predetermines roles; rushed for time or money, ignorant of participatory methodologies or simply unwilling to cede control of the development process, PVO/NGOs may fail to practice what they preach.

- After decades of rural development work, the continuing obscurity of participatory methodologies spotlights the lack of commitment to participation. Training offered to PVO/NGOs is far more likely to deal with proposal writing, financial management techniques or donors' reporting requirements than the processes of beneficiary-led project design.

- Effective participation requires questioning time-honored methods and risking new approaches, so it may seem counterintuitive, especially to development workers steeped in old ways; for example, working only though the visible leadership of chieftancy and community notables is an inadequate method for reaching those not represented in the typical patriarchal gerentocracy, such as women, youth, displaced families, or ethnic minorities.

- Participation in NRM requires a full understanding and appreciation of indigenous knowledge systems and coping strategies, areas where few outside agencies or governments have given due consideration; harder still, participation requires a willingness to accept the priorities of the beneficiaries themselves, rather than offering take-it-or-leave-it packages of technical assistance.

- Complicating matters is the fact that isolated rural resource users cannot know the range of technologies, institutional arrangements or the impact of various options, nor can they readily estimate the real skills, resources and motivation of outsiders; they typically take what is suggested on the terms offered.

- Even for PVO/NGOs inclined to let resource users participate fully in planning NRM actions, it is difficult to get funding for time-consuming preparation work, or for the atypical agenda of activities that will result from beneficiary-led designs, i.e., it may be impossible to package untidy community-level NRM activities into the categories of donor funding.

Collaboration and Knowledge Transfer

Two closely related realities:

1. PVO/NGOs effectiveness is greatly enhanced by coordination, mutual support and information exchange.

2. Communications in NRM are weak, greatly hampering the adaptation and application of successful initiatives and reducing the value of lessons learned.

Donor involvement and investments in creating or furthering PVO/NGO linkages have been slow and insufficient. What is worse, sometimes donors encourage counterproductive competition among PVO/NGOs.

- Many cases of inefficiency and reduced results due to poor exchange of information on common problems could be cited, such as two separate USAID-funded PVO/NGO umbrella projects in Africa, where subgrantees' ignorance of each other's technical innovations in NRM led to failures of some PVO/NGOs to solve problems.

- The difficulties of knowledge transfer expand exponentially across international borders, even within offices of agencies operating in several countries; a detailed study of 13 of USAID's PVO/NGO umbrella projects in Africa with total dollar budgets in excess of $160,000,000 revealed poor information exchange among projects, so cumulative learning has been quite limited.

- In each of the countries where the USAID-funded NGO NRMS project operates, it has helped set up NRM working groups that bring together PVO/NGOs to establish their own agendas and carry out interagency activities; the results have been quite impressive; NGO NRMS, which is itself managed by a consortium of three NGOs, is a sterling example of what can be accomplished in NRM when collaborative approaches are fully exploited.

- National PVO/NGO coordinating bodies or consortia exist in many countries, and are often the focal point of information exchange and interaction within the PVO/NGO community; most are overburdened with work, especially in support of national NGOs and other indigenous groups; they are usually underfunded, in part because donors prefer financing projects that promise direct and visible impact on target groups.

- In several umbrella projects USAID has tried to throw PVO/NGOs into direct competition with each other; in none of these projects has such competition increased the quantity or quality of proposals, and it has hardly enhanced collaboration.

- Regional PVO/NGO coordinating bodies or forums of exchange have been slow to develop and hard to sustain; for example, a series of PVO/NGO Canadian-U.S.-Sahel workshops on NRM came to a halt last year after three successful encounters because no U.S. agency volunteered to represent the American NGO community in organizing joint events; unlike

the national PVO/NGO consortia of various Sahelian countries and the Canadian NGO consortia Solidarite-Canada-Sahel, the U.S. NGOs have no appropriate coordinating body to work on topic- and region-specific activities.

USAID and Other Donors and Their Support for PVO/NGOs in NRM

USAID and other bilateral and multilateral donors are continually adjusting their policies and program focus in response to internal discourse and to pressures from higher constituencies, such as Congress in the case of USAID. PVO/NGOs remain largely marginal in the overall NRM investments and strategies of these donors.

- In the wake of the recent reorganization of USAID, it appears that there is no clear constituency within the Africa Bureau for supporting implementation of PVO/NGO activities in NRMS, that is, no office now appears to be in a position to coordinate, advocate and fund this work.

- The centrally funded NGO NRMS Project is one of the truly bright spots in USAID's support for strengthening PVO/NGO NRM work in Africa; despite rave reviews in its midterm evaluation, this project will soon be terminated by USAID for reasons completely unconnected to its fine record and great potential.

- The decentralization of USAID towards increasing the powers of individual country missions, whatever its positive aspects, has further reduced the Agency's ability to design or fund intercountry projects in NRM, despite the obvious advantages of regional approaches for enhanced knowledge transfer and collaborative action; most other bilateral and multilateral funders seem similarly unwilling or unable to develop and support regional approaches for PVO/NGO activities in NRM.

- When UNDP discovered NGOs a few years ago, the Africa 2000 initiative was announced, which promised to make a million dollars available to NGOs; however, it took years for the first round of funding to reach PVO/NGO communities in Africa, and when divided among many countries, only $25,000 per country was available.

- Most NRM activity is long term, and as such requires continuity and perseverance in focus and funding; USAID experiences such frequent changes in personnel and policies that maintaining its involvement in NRM activities has been problematic; for example, one USAID mission prematurely terminated an award-winning forestry project on the grounds that USAID's country strategy had changed.

- Flexibility and experimentation are key reasons for donors to work with PVO/NGOs in NRM, yet innovation by PVO/NGO grantees may be discouraged by rigidities in donors' procedures and expectations; examples for USAID include strict interpretation of its own NGO registration requirements so that national agencies are effectively excluded from funding, and preoccupation with fiscal accountability in situations where rigidity reduces

effectiveness; these policies and attitudes work against novel approaches, untested partner agencies and necessary risk taking.

The PVO/NGO—Donor Interface

There is considerable evidence that donors rarely have deep understanding of PVO/NGO communities or of how to make best use of their strengths in NRM; traditional donor-contractor modalities and mentalities are inappropriate for the partnerships that are required to support PVO/NGO work in NRM in Africa.

- Until quite recently, northern PVO/NGOs have been the major source of technical and financial assistance to the emerging African NGO movements; despite the well-documented problems of PVO/NGO north-south partnerships, they have strengthened both indigenous and foreign PVO/NGOs.

- PVO/NGOs provide donors a link to local populations, and in doing so are often in a delicate balancing act between their funding source and their client groups; the implications of PVO/NGOs' complex intermediary role are often lost on donors that assume control flows only in the direction of the money flow, and accountability only flows in the opposite direction.

- Some USAID missions have begun to fund joint actions of U.S. NGOs with national NGOs and a few fund national NGOs directly, but most have yet to develop effective relationships with national NGO communities.

- Many times, donors treat PVO/NGOs much the same as for-profit contracting firms, i.e., efficient means to reach donor objectives, rather than as partner agencies with their own valid agendas, operating modalities and institutional mandates; the most successful USAID umbrella projects in Africa are those that view strengthening PVO/NGOs as an objective in itself, and so combine enhanced capacities of the implementing agencies with more usual measures of physical attainment.

- One of the most consistent findings of recent research of USAID umbrella projects in Africa is that USAID does not adequately understand the PVO/NGO community and the grass-roots milieu in which it functions, resulting in a pattern of unrealistic project targets in such areas as funding absorption capacity, implementation timeframe and technical capacity, among other elements; perhaps compared to the intricacies of negotiating macro policy reform or other capital city activities of USAID missions, PVO/NGO programs and rural realities may appear uncomplicated; whatever the reasons, USAID staff seem prone to underestimating the complexities and the requirements for effective support of PVO/NGO activities.

- A perception of weakness vis-a-vis donors had led PVO/NGOs to acquiesce to donor interpretations of their roles and functions; U.S. NGOs' dependence on USAID make them

unlikely to push too hard for change; except for the larger NGOs or those with a diversified funding base, the tendency is to accept funds on the terms offered, such as, overly tight schedule, too much or too little funds or wildly optimistic outputs, and make the best of it, even if this risks compromise in genuine participation, local institutional strengthening or other success factors for sustainable development.

PRIORITIES

Conceptualizing "Natural Resource Management"

Goal

Articulate and apply a practical and inclusive conceptualization of NRM that takes into account the diversity of actors and that encourages integrated actions.

Purpose

Develop practical, holistic conceptualizations of NRM.

- Build a consensus among the parties involved on how best to construe "NRM," including the thinking of advocates and practitioners on all sides, i.e., ecologists, export-oriented economists, preservationists, appropriate technologists, agriculturalists, social scientists, and so forth.

Use this definition in consistent, inclusive ways among all the major actors and stakeholders.

- At least within USAID and its programs (if not other bilateral and multilateral funding agencies), apply a definition of NRM to PVO/NGO proposals and activities in ways to encourage collaboration and integrated planning and performance of all PVO/NGOs whose work impacts upon NRM practices.

- Encourage more thorough NRM impact analysis of PVO/NGO agricultural productivity projects.

Assumption

The newly elected U.S. administration and Congress will continue to emphasize the lexicon and concepts of NRM in foreign assistance activities.

Local Institution Strengthening: The Base of NRM

Goal

Build a broad appreciation and understanding of the institutional aspects of NRM, and apply this understanding to project design and implementation.

Purpose

Provide guidance for improved analysis by PVO/NGOs of the local institutional context.

- Develop practical methodologies for integrating institutional analysis into project design processes, so that is becomes as normal as WID or any other socioeconomic component of design.

Institutionalize institutional analysis.

- Have all the various development players carry out analysis of NRM-related institutions with the rigor used and reserved for economic or technical analyses; by way of analogy, no donor would accept a proposal to work on an insect infestation without reviewing detailed entomological and environmental studies, but they routinely fund community NRM work without knowing potential impacts on beneficiaries' existing institutions.

Make the central importance of institutional analysis widely known.

- Identify and employ measurable indicators of institutional development in project goals, objectives, and outputs and strategy; only in figuring out how to count these institutional "beans" will such items be taken seriously by donors' "bean counters," and all involved will learn more about the impact of NRM efforts.

- Document and disseminate the case history evidence that the establishment and strengthening of self-reliant institutions (rather than simple accomplishment of some discrete physical objective) is often the salient long-term positive result of NRM efforts.

Assumption

PVO/NGOs and donors can be convinced that local institutions are worthy of more attention than usually given them, and will act on this conviction.

African Governments' Policies and Attitudes Towards Control of Resource Use, the Rights of Rural Resource Users, and the Role of PVO/NGOs.

Goal

Encourage legal frameworks, national policies and democratic development favorable to local management of resources and PVO/NGO involvement in NRM.

Purpose

Help governments of Africa adapt to approaches more conducive to user-based resource management.

- Provide technical assistance and other inputs to governments and national efforts that are attempting to reform tenure codes or decentralize NRM authority.

- Work with national and subnational official institutions in ways that allows them to experience the positive potential of self-governing approaches to local resource management, i.e., include them into these NRM activities as partners, rather than only treating them as part of the problem.

- Continue to analyze and publicize the impact of governments' policies and practices as they constrain rational NRM by resource users.

Show by practical example the advantages of user-based resource management.

- Design more NRM demonstration projects that provide meaningful opportunities for locally constituted resource user groups to negotiate use rights over their customary resources, and so provide the guidance and impetus for formal alterations in centralized resource management.

- Document and replicate these experiments.

Use donors' funding conditionality and the collective lobbying weight of organized PVO/NGO communities in creative ways to oblige reluctant governments to look at alternatives to centralized resource management and colonial-era mindsets in NRM.

- Facilitate policy experimentation in devolution of resource control to local levels.

- Lobby for freedom of association as a human right.

- Support removal of unnecessary restrictions on national and foreign PVO/NGOs, and improved interaction between the "independent sector" and government.

Assumption

The current wave of democratization of government and pluralism in African societies will continue and expand.

Popular Participation: Operational Imperative Rather Than Vague Slogan

Goal

Improve the genuine participation of resource users in PVO/NGO NRM activities.

Purpose

Provide PVO/NGOs with the tools to involve would-be beneficiaries in all phases of project design and implementation.

- Participatory methodologies such as rapid rural appraisal need to be more thoroughly developed and tested in NRM, and much more widely disseminated; when they are thoroughly accessible they can be assimilated, accepted and finally expected in all NRM efforts.

- Training activities for PVO/NGO personnel and other development professionals should deal with participation as a central concern of NRM, on a par with technical and administrative matters.

Make the connection between the principles of popular participation and the practicality of resource-user institutional development.

- The seminal role of user participation in NRM activities highlights the importance of strengthening rural structures such as CBOs as ends in themselves, rather than vehicles to accomplish project objectives; in order for resource users to negotiate and manage governance responsibilities they must be organized, and helping them do so is a core NRM activity.

Provide PVO/NGOs with the incentives to involve would-be beneficiaries in all phases of project design and implementation.

- Donors' expectations for accountability and accomplishment in NRM need to expand beyond fiscal stewardship and physical measures to also encompass meaningful participation by user groups, with concomitant funding for the process and timeframe this entails.

Assumptions

That governments can make meaningful commitments to popular participation by rural people, beyond urban-based democratic initiatives and polities and beyond centralized structures.

All major outside groups such as donors, PVO/NGOs and governments will be willing to accept the cost of genuine participation in terms of shared authority, longer project preparation, and increased financial commitments.

Collaboration and Knowledge Transfer

Goal

Develop strategies and programs that optimize the timely exchange of ideas and innovations, and enhance interagency coordination among NGOs in NRM.

Purpose

Build on initiatives in NGO coordination already in place.

- Provide relatively small, well-targeted funding support to national-level PVO/NGO coordinating bodies for their work in NRM issues.

- Networks of data exchange, such as the three-country Sahel Information System, deserve to be supported and enlarged to include more countries and better data connection.

Develop approaches to transferring knowledge among countries.

- Regional or subregional PVO/NGO groupings or other intercountry forums focused on NRM could have immense impact, cutting years from the time it takes for innovations to move among countries, and bringing practitioners and policy advocates together for mutual benefit.

Increase investment that furthers collaboration.

- Donors concerned with scaling up benefits of successful activities in NRM, should consider funding innovative ways of spreading the news and encouraging replication, including intercountry forums and NGO-to-NGO training.

- Leave marketplace concepts of competition for its own sake out of PVO/NGO support of NRM work; I-win-you-lose competition inhibits information exchange and collaboration within the PVO/NGO community.

Assumptions

Donors will accept the necessity of supporting interagency collaboration and can be discouraged from counterproductive emphasis on competition among PVO/NGOs.

PVO/NGOs, caught up in their individual institutional concerns and own aggrandizement, will see the benefit and find the will to work together.

USAID and Other Donors and Their Support for PVO/NGOs in NRM, and the PVO/NGO Interface.

Goal

Establish funding mechanisms and project designs appropriate to the capacities, needs and interests of PVO/NGOs.

Purpose

Improve donors' understanding of PVO/NGO communities and their milieux.

- Carry out detailed preproject analysis of PVO/NGO and other potential project participants.

- Include PVO/NGOs as integral partners in elaborating project criteria for NRM-related projects and in designing NRM projects.

- Provide practical orientation and training for donors' personnel working with PVO/NGOs; for instance, many USAID NGO Liaison Officers are unfamiliar with the Agency's own grant mechanisms and regulations for PVO/NGO funding; much less do they understand the institutional culture of NGOs.

- Set up frequent forums for donor-PVO/NGO exchange and contact in-country on NRM issues, as well as fostering interagency relationships.

Reframe donor expectations and procedures to make best use of PVO/NGO capacities to innovate and experiment.

- Establish funding criteria and design projects so that carefully calculated risk taking is encouraged and that results of experimentation is captured, analyzed and shared.

Create within USAID, other donors and the PVO/NGO community an appreciation of the unique communications and support role of regional NRM projects, and develop the mechanism to finance such efforts.

- Find the means to continue and enlarge the NGO NRMS project in USAID Washington; failure to do so draws into serious question the Agency's commitment to strengthening PVO/NGO work in NRM.

- Build a coalition among collaboration-minded PVO/NGOs and USAID personnel that can jointly design effective regional NRM initiatives and lobby for their acceptance both within USAID and within the larger PVO/NGO community;.

Expand use of funding approaches that strengthen PVO/NGOs and that insulate NRM long-term investments from the vagaries of donors' abrupt policy and personnel changes.

- Umbrella projects offer flexible opportunities to combine training, collaboration and other support services with grant funding for PVO/NGOs in NRM.

- Umbrella projects that employ independent intermediary management units have strong advantages over umbrella projects managed directly by USAID in that they can fund national NGOs that are not yet registered with USAID, can avoid red tape and can more easily relate to the multiple needs of PVO/NGOs while simultaneously reducing USAID's management burden.

- Umbrella project mechanisms may be a partial answer to rapid changes in donors' commitments, especially if they are set up to become ongoing national institutions mandated to balance funding sources and maintain long-term support of PVO/NGO work in NRM.

Assumption

USAID, a giant bureaucracy with its own internal dynamics and external pressures, is able to make these adjustments in its policies and practices.

AREAS FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

Conceptualizing "Natural Resource Management"

- How do various donors, African governments, conservation and development-oriented PVO/NGOs and others conceptualize NRM, both in broad definition and in actual application?

- How do these global perspectives of outside entities relate to the conceptualization and practices of the actual resource user groups in Africa?

- Concerning activities not usually labeled "NRM," for example, the widespread dissemination of fuel-efficient cookstoves in urban areas, if such activities have great

impact on resource use, how can this positive impact be valued in NRM planning and funding?

Local Institution Strengthening: The Base of NRM

- How can PVO/NGO and donor sensitivity to local institutions be enhanced?
- How can their analysis in this area be improved without making project preparation unduly long and expensive?
- What resources for improving institutional analysis exist and how are they currently used by PVO/NGOs and others at the grass-roots level?
- What roles are there for anthropologists and other social scientists in developing rapid and effective methods for analyzing, and where necessary, modifying and/or strengthening rule systems of resource use and other elements of local institutions for NRM?

African Governments' Policies and Attitudes Towards Control of Resource Use, the Rights of Rural Resource Users, and the Role of PVO/NGOs.

- How can PVO/NGOs and donors, in their separate ways, influence the development of:
  - More positive attitudes on the part of African governments towards resource users;
  - Devolution of management rights for local resources; and
  - Reform in legislative codes governing forestlands and tenure, among other NRM-related issues?
- How can we better capture the experiences and lessons of NRM projects that experiment with policy innovations?

Popular Participation: Operational Imperative Rather Than Vague Slogan

- What do various stakeholders (PVO/NGOs, donors, governments) understand by the vocabulary of popular participation, and how committed are they to such involvements?
- How can donors effectively encourage PVO/NGOs to develop and practice better methods of participation?
- How can PVO/NGOs convince donors to give more credence and investment to their efforts at genuine participation?

- What might be done to make the relationship between PVO/NGOs and rural communities more equitable, i.e., to allow target groups to deal with outsiders on more even footing?

Collaboration and Knowledge Transfer

- How do ideas and innovations transfer among PVO/NGOs within a country and between them, i.e., how do these agencies learn from each other?

- The Canadian NGO community seems to be far ahead of the U.S. NGOs in terms of organizing for joint action; what can we learn from our northern neighbors in this regard?

- Why has no grouping of U.S. NGOs emerged along the lines of CCIC in Canada that can serve as an umbrella for field-level collaboration among PVO/NGOs in various regions and sectors? If Inter-Action could play such a role—and it may not be mandated to do so—why has this not happened? What might be done to spur more effective collaboration among U.S. NGOs in NRM?

- How can we analyze the real costs and impact of improved communication and collaboration, for example, comparing the expense of promoting regional exchanges on NRM topics of wide significance versus the lost opportunities of not doing this work? How can the value of knowledge transfer be quantified and made visible to support the rich anecdotal evidence?

USAID and Other Donors and Their Support for PVO/NGOs in NRM, and the PVO/NGO Interface.

- In practical terms, how can we design and implement "donor education" programs for donor staff working with PVO/NGOs?

- As USAID moves towards more decentralized authority in the hands of its individual country missions, and Washington offices of USAID appear less able to fund and support needed regional initiatives in NRM (such as the NGO NRMS project), what can be done to salvage the situation?

- How can we assess the net effect of USAID's efforts to put NGO funding on an openly competitive basis, i.e., the real costs in terms of preparation for competitive bidding, the impact on interagency collaboration and willingness to share data, the increasing acceptance by NGOs of competitive modalities for defining development priorities, programs and methodologies, and the decline in NGO-designed programming?

- For those who advocate for long-term continuity in donor commitments for PVO/NGO NRM work, and for funding criteria that reward necessary risk taking and innovation: how can we press our case most effectively?